WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A communications module, comprising:

a host interface port connectable to a media access control interface of a host system;

a network medium interface port connectable to a network medium; and

a protocol handler operable to identify a communications protocol compatible with the host system and to adaptively self-configure communications between the host interface port and the network medium interface port in accordance with the identified compatible communications protocol.

2. The communications module of claim 1, wherein the protocol handler is operable to identify the compatible communications protocol based on at least one signal received through the host interface port.

3. The communications module of claim 2, wherein the protocol handler is operable to detect a data rate of a signal received through the host interface port.

4. The communications module of claim 3, wherein the protocol handler comprises a frequency detector.

5. The communications module of claim 2, wherein the protocol handler is operable to identify the compatible communications protocol by recognizing a pattern in a signal received through the host interface port.

6. The communications module of claim 5, wherein the protocol handler is operable to recognize a pattern in a data frame of a signal received through the host interface port.

7. The communications module of claim 5, wherein the protocol handler is operable to recognize an auto-negotiation initialization pattern in a signal received through the host interface port.

8. The communications module of claim 1, wherein the protocol handler is operable to auto-negotiate a compatible communications protocol with the host system.

9. The communications module of claim 8, wherein the protocol handler is operable to obtain initial handshaking information from the host system.

10. The communications module of claim 9, wherein the protocol handler is operable to transfer the initial handshaking information to a link partner connected to the network medium.

11. The communications module of claim 10, wherein the protocol handler is operable to auto-negotiate a compatible communications protocol with the link partner.

12. The communications module of claim 11, wherein the protocol handler is operable to adaptively self-configure communications between the host interface port and the network medium interface port in accordance with the auto-negotiated communications protocol compatible with both the host system and the link partner.

13. A communications method, comprising:

identifying a communications protocol compatible with a host system; and

adaptively self-configuring communications between a host interface port of a communications module and a network medium interface port of the communications module in accordance with the identified compatible communications protocol.

14. The communications method of claim 13, wherein the compatible communications protocol is identified based on at least one signal received through the host interface port.

15. The communications method of claim 14, wherein the compatible communications protocol is identified based on detection of a data rate of a signal received through the host interface port.

16. The communications method of claim 14, wherein the compatible communications protocol is identified based on recognition of a pattern in a signal received through the host interface port.

17. The communications method of claim 16, wherein the compatible communications protocol is identified based on recognition of a pattern in a data frame of a signal received through the host interface port.

18. The communications method of claim 16, wherein the compatible communications protocol is identified based on recognition of an auto-negotiation initialization pattern in a signal received through the host interface port.

19. The communications method of claim 13, further comprising auto-negotiating a compatible communications protocol with the host system.

20. The communications method of claim 19, wherein initial handshaking information is obtained from the host system during auto-negotiation.